ENGLAND AND ROME

A STUDY IN CATHOLIC ASSENT

BY

HAKLUYT EGERTON

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LEIGHTON BUZZARD:
THE FAITH PRESS
1910

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PREFACE.

THE first Essay was written for the Dominican *Revue Thomiste*, and is now republished by permission.

The Postscripts were written in the course of correspondence with a Dominican critic.

The other Essay is closely connected with that correspondence by its argument but was quite unconnected therewith in origin.

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ENGLAND AND ROME

A STUDY IN CATHOLIC ASSENT.

THE courtesy of the Editor permits me to undertake a very difficult task. I desire to give a positive account of certain ideas which are operative or implicit in the High Church Movement within the Church of England,—to exhibit that movement, not as a phase of ecclesiastical controversy, but as the incomplete discovery of a Christian *Welt-Anschauung*. In other words, I desire to give an account of certain ideas which are formative in the High Church Movement,—that is, which are actually at work in that movement,—and of certain others to which that movement points.

The task is exceedingly difficult,—more difficult for me than it would be for one who could bring to it only the careful disinterestedness of purely scientific inquiry. I hope that I bring to it that dispassionate care; I know that I bring to it something very different,—the interest, namely, of the convinced adherent who, in his own small way, has done something to develope by interpretation the movement he is invited to describe.* I cannot pretend that my description will be uninfluenced by my

*I may be permitted to refer, once for all, to *A New Way in Apologetic* (Mowbray's, Oxford) and *Liberal Theology and the Ground of Faith* (Pitman, London).

interpretation,—by ideas which, although I believe them to be true, are primarily my own and indicate convictions which may not be general. This is one source of difficulty.

Another and yet greater difficulty arises from the nature and circumstances of the High Church Movement. In those interesting books which attempt to classify, as well as to describe, the spiritual movements of the nineteenth century, the High Church Movement is ordinarily connected with that retrospective Romanticism —very different from the Romanticism of Wordsworth— which is diversely illustrated by the historical novels of Sir Walter Scott, by the new interest in Gothic architecture and ancient ballad-literature, and by Carlyle's biography of the Abbot Sampson in *Past and Present.* Now, if we compare the Catholic religion with, let us say, the rationalistic *Aufklärung* of the eighteenth century or the scientific *Aufklärung* of the 19th, or with modern secularism, we shall easily discover in it elements and characteristics which unmistakably connect it with the great Romantic movements in human history. I will not maintain, here and now, that the Oxford Movement was a revival of the Catholic religion,—to do so would unfairly strain the courtesy which permits me to use these pages,—but we may all honestly agree that it was intended to re-assert Catholic conceptions. If it was not Catholic, it at least attempted to be Catholic, and, in virtue of this attempt, it was (in some way and measure), Romantic.

From the point of view then of the philosophy of history, we may rightly describe the Oxford Movement as a re-awakening of the Romantic spirit in English religious life. But neither to friends nor foes did the movement seem to be this. Men were conscious of new

ideas, but not of a new spirit. Had the Oxford Movement been self-consciously Romantic—a revolt of *feeling* against the poorer forms of Reason, of *life* against impoverishing conventions—it could hardly have failed to express itself in a new philosophy, in a re-valuation of human life and human powers. The early literature of the Movement, however, discloses nothing of the kind, —nothing comparable with the revolt of Herder or Jacobi against Kant, of our modern Humanists against Hegel.

Romanticism has its ground in feeling, in apprehensions that go beyond the demonstrable, in the creative (poetic) powers of the human spirit, and every romantic movement is an attempt, more or less wide-reaching, to re-establish life and thought upon that ground. To-day, reflective High Churchmen are beginning to recognise that the Movement which has made them what they are is, in fact, a movement of that kind, but this recognition is quite recent and as yet it is neither general nor complete. At first, the Oxford Movement seemed to be merely a movement within a narrow circle of ecclesiastical and theological ideas. Even then, indeed, its connection with Romanticism was apparent, To some, however,—as to Newman when he wrote *Loss and Gain*—that connection seemed trivial. To others it seemed merely accidental, and they believed that they gave an adequate account of it when they said that renewed interest in the mediæval world fostered interest in the religion of that world. No one then discerned in the movement a deeper and integral Romanticism. No one then imagined that it would one day create a new religious consciousness and place religious thought upon new foundations. We can see to-day that it is doing this, and the principal object of this paper is to give some account of this as yet

incomplete achievement. I wish to set before you the type of religious thought which (within the Church of England) has been created by the Oxford Movement.

Certain facts, however, make it very difficult to do this. The Oxford Movement has been characteristically theological and practical. It has never been governed by philosophical conceptions, and has but recently concerned itself with the distinctive problems of apologetic and the philosophy of religion.

Although, however, the Oxford Movement has not been *governed* by philosophical conceptions, its later literature bears the impress of such conceptions. The present generation of Churchmen has been taught by men who learned philosophy at Oxford from that brilliant exponent of Neo-Kantianism, Professor T. H. Green. In different ways they all departed, more or less, from Green's teaching, but they remained Idealists and their work bears the unmistakeable impress of Idealism.*

We may not ignore the fact that the Church of England has no official philosophy. The Reformation swept away the traditional philosophy of the Church and did not provide a substitute. Since that time Anglican thinkers have had either to extemporise thought or to borrow whatever seemed useful from the philosophy of their day. During its later course the Oxford Movement borrowed chiefly from the contemporary Oxford Idealism. The idealistic conceptions which are so abundant in the later literature of the Movement were not developed within the Movement : they were borrowed from contemporary secular philosophy. Moreover, they were borrowed for certain limited purposes,

*We find that impress clear in *Lux Mundi*, in Moberly's *Ministerial Priesthood* in Illingworth's *Reason and Revelation*, and in Bishop Gore's book on the Eucharist *(The Body of Christ.)*

sometimes for certain preliminary purposes,—in order, for instance, to justify a Theistic *Welt-Anschauung*, or to explain (in Hegelian fashion) the religious significance of a time-process or the importance of the social factor in religion.

For criticism, these facts are of primary importance. Those borrowed philosophical conceptions are incidental, not essential. They are adjuncts of theology, not inferences from theology, not the foundations of theology. Sometimes, no immediate inference is possible from a writer's incidental philosophy to his theological intention and belief.

The time for such a borrowing is, however, coming to an end. To-day, High-Church thought is entering upon a new phase,—a phase which will be marked by the independent developement of apologetic thought from the conceptions which define and characterise the religious content of the High Church Movement. Those are the conceptions which I desire to place before you. Unfortunately, not every one of them has yet become clearly explicit in the general consciousness. Not the least important of them is still implicit rather than explicit,—implicit in the life of the High Church Movement, in Christian experience within that Movement,—and he who would describe them must first disclose them. My account of them will therefore involve interpretation,—an interpretation which I am bound to confess has not yet become general. I venture to hope, however, that it will not be misleading.

II.

The Oxford Movement began as an attempt to revive within the Church of England the consciousness of her own spiritual authority in matters of religion.

There are some who hold that the Church of England does not possess spiritual authority,—at least, not such authority as the Catholic Church has always claimed and exercised. The Tudor legislation, they think, created a new religious body which did not inherit the spiritual preogatives and mission of the Catholic Church, but derived whatever authority it possessed from the Secular Power. The Church of England, however, has never so thought of herself, nor did the leaders of the English Reformation so think of their work. Even Henry VIII. clearly recognised, in the despoiled and fettered Church of his later years, an authority which was independent of his own,—independent of the secular authority of his crown, independent even of that other vaguely-defined authority which he claimed as "Supreme Head."

The Church of England has never wholly lost this thought of spiritual authority and mission, although her rulers have often been scandalously unmindful of it. One must admit, however, that, under the Hanoverian Kings, she gave but few signs of such an authority and such a mission. Certain clergyman, indeed, were respectable for learning and for unobtrusive virtues, but the practical system of the Church, in its everyday working, did not strikingly suggest the Spirit-bearing Body, the Bride of Christ. The secular accidents and supports of the Church were more conspicuous than that Divine character which an unbroken although sometimes tenuous tradition of thought has always attributed to her.

These secular accidents and supports were—with many other things in England—rudely menaced by the agitations which preceded the passing of the great Reform Bill of 1832, and, to many earnest Churchmen, the reforming spirit of the new era inaugurated by that event seemed

dangerously hostile. The secular advantages and privileges of the Church had given to her ministers a certain respectable and authoritative position in the fabric of English society. If political changes deprived them of that position, what authority would remain with them? This was the question which Newman asked and answered in the first of the *Tracts for the Times*. There would remain, he said, the authority of the Apostolical commission,—the authority conveyed through the Apostolical succession of the Anglican Bishops.

That answer marked the commencement of a new era in the history of the Church of England. It asserted, indeed, nothing new, for the doctrine of Apostolical Succession is plainly expressed and clearly implied in the Anglican form of ordination, and since the Reformation it had more than once become prominent in both controversy and policy. Yet most Churchmen of those days found something of welcome or unwelome novelty in Newman's answer. Consider for a moment what that answer implied. It implied (or was thought to imply) the Catholicity of the Church of England. It implied (or was thought to imply) that the Church of England is the Catholic Church in England,—one, by continuity of life, with the Pre-Reformation Church, with the Church of the Great Councils, with the Church of the first Christian Pentecost. Moreover, Newman did not intend the implied conception to be otiose. He intended it to be the ground and inspiration of a new policy. In effect, he called upon the Church of England to meet the menaces of the new Liberalism by asserting for herself a Divine mission and authority which the State had not given and could not take away. *This* was the novelty,—not the doctrine asserted, but the

policy advocated, the use to which the doctrine was put.

Here, then, at the very commencement of the Oxford Movement, we have the conception which, beyond all others, has been formative in that Movement,—the conception of the Church as the Divine Society, Divine in its constitution, its mission, its gifts, its authority.

III.

Ecclesiastical authority must always be a *present* authority. Where and what is the present authority of the Church of England? This question, otherwise expressed, was answered by Newman in the first of the famous *Tracts*. The Church of England, he thought, had an actual and valid authority in virtue of the Divine Commission borne (as he then believed) by her ministers.

That answer fastened attention, not on the Living Christian Society, but on a certain succession of individuals within the Society. It asserted or suggested that authority pertained immediately and exclusively to that succession,—not to the community of the faithful, not to the Church as a whole. It inevitably tended to isolate the Bishops within the Church, to confine the authoritative tradition of Christian truth to the episcopal order, and to make the claim of the Church of England to speak with the authority of that tradition dependent (or seem dependent) upon the fidelity of her Bishops to that tradition.

We know what happened. Pusey tells us that, one day at Littlemore, Newman said to him—"Oh, Pusey! we have leant on the Bishops, and they have broken down under us!" What was Pusey's reply? I do not know, but he has himself recorded what he thought :—

"It was too late then to say anything! he was already leaving us. But I thought to myself, 'at least I never leant on the Bishops: I leant on the Church of England.'"*

"I leant on the Church of England." Here we have the thought which became the characteristic note of all the later developement of the High Church Movement,—the thought, namely, of a corporate authority, the thought that spiritual authority is primarily the authority of a Living Society, of the Church as a whole, of the Spirit-bearing Body. It was this thought (variously and with various clearness expressed) that sustained High Churchmen through long years of neglect, misrepresentation, and persecution, and enabled them to maintain their ground even when Bishops and judges were hostile. The Bishops were still recognised as *jure Divino* the governors of the Church, as governors especially charged to maintain the sacred tradition of Christian thought and practice. That tradition, however, was believed to be a corporate, not a merely episcopal tradition,—a tradition of the Living Church and not exclusively of its rulers.†

This had most important consequences :—

(1) If the Sacred Tradition be corporate, and not exclusively episcopal, the occasional defection of a Bishop does not destroy that tradition or the authority of it. We High Churchmen of the modern type are distressed by Episcopal aberrations, but—so long as those aberrations merely illustrate idiosyncracies of individual minds—we are not unsettled by them.

(2) If the Bishops are the agents and guardians

**Life of Edward Bouverie Pusey.* By Henry Parry Liddon, D.D. Vol. II, p. 237

†It was supposed that in the Œcumenical Councils each Bishop bore witness to the tradition of his diocese.

of a sovereign corporate tradition, their rule is legitimate only when supported by that tradition. When they separate themselves from that tradition their rule may be accurately described as a tyranny.

This explains the individualism, sometimes aberrant, which has more than once been conspicuous in the High Church Movement.* Politicians and Bishops have found it hard to believe that High Churchmen—who believed episcopal government to be of the *esse* of the Church—could honestly disobey the orders of their Bishops. The disobedience of those men was the expression of a deeper loyalty,—loyalty to the Living Church, loyalty to a tradition which was believed to be sovereign over Bishops and laymen alike. High Churchmen decisively and completely reject the thought of episcopal autocracy.

IV.

What is meant by a "corporate tradition"? Clearly, a corporate tradition is the tradition of some society,—a tradition which subsists, not merely in the minds of individuals who belong to that society, but also in the constitution and characteristic life of that society. Now, High Churchmen believe that what they call "the Catholic tradition" of the Church of England so subsists. It subsists, they think, not merely in the minds of certain members of the Church of England, but also in the constitution, the doctrinal standards, the rites, the worship, and the sacraments of that Church.

It is, however, necessary to distinguish between the continuance of a doctrinal tradition and the spiritual authority of the tradition-bearing body. Assume for a

*It explains, too, the demand for a revival of synodical action. A Bishop, it was thought, should seek the assistance of those who, within the geographical limits of his diocese, shared with him the corporate inheritance of the sacred tradition.

moment that the regulative doctrinal tradition of the Church of England is a tradition of genuinely Catholic doctrines. The existence of that tradition would not, in and by itself, make the Church of England participant in the authority of the Catholic Church,—would not give to the Church of England that unique claim to the loyalty of English Christians which can belong only to the Catholic Church in England.

A doctrinal tradition may be nothing more than a remembrance, but—certainly !—a corporate remembrance of Catholic doctrine (if it were *merely* a remembrance) would not suffice to make the remembering body Catholic. Is the "Catholic tradition" of the Church of England more than a remembrance ?

Undoubtedly, the thought of the Oxford Movement was largely retrospective. It turned to the Past, to the "Undivided Church," to the Church of the Great Councils. The "appeal to Antiquity" has been the characteristic argument of High Church apologists. They have shewn (or attempted to show) that certain doctrines held, as they rightly or wrongly believed, by the Church of England, were not Anglican innovations, but were primitive *credenda*,—had been held by the "Undivided Church" and were supported by the authority of that Church.

Permit me to a place myself, for one moment, in the position of an unfriendly critic. I can imagine such an one saying something like this :—"Even if your theologians were successful in their attempt, for what could their success avail ? East and West have separated. The 'Undivided Church' to which your doctors appealed no longer exists : its authority is a *past* authority. The Anglican tradition is not a

tradition of spiritual authority: it is merely the tradition of a memory."

Suppose this said,—what could High Churchmen reply? I will resume my proper character and will endeavour to suggest a reply. The appeal to Antiquity, if it be the beginning, is not the end of Anglican apologetic. The use made of it has been chiefly polemical. High Churchmen found themselves confronted, even in their own land, by another Communion, —a Communion which asserted an exclusive right to the Catholic name and held doctrines which the Church of England did not hold. Moved to self-defence, they appealed to Christian Antiquity, and attempted to show that the asserted right and the differentiating doctrines were novelties,—were departures from the authentic tradition of Christian belief and not (even by implication) parts of the original deposit of faith.

To High Churchmen that appeal was conclusive. They used the Vincentian formula as a criterion, and they had conceptions of the Catholic Church which were more or less adequately represented by what is known as "The Branch Theory." They admitted that unity is one of the notes of the Catholic Church, and they knew that, in earlier Christian centuries, the unity of the Church had been an obvious and operative unity. They believed, however, that indefensible accidents of history had impaired (but not destroyed) the Church's unity, and that the Catholic Church—although still one through Christ its Head and through the identical sacraments which nourish its every part,—now subsists on earth only in members which are more or less widely separated from each other. When they looked abroad upon Christendom through those precon-

ceptions, they saw that each constituent but separated member of the Church had its own distinctive tradition of Christian doctrine, and deemed the *differentia* of its own doctrine important. And these men, be it remembered,—the men who had those thoughts and that outlook,—regarded the Vincentian formula as a criterion. Was not their appeal to Antiquity natural?

It was more than natural: it was inevitable and it seemed conclusive. To those appellant theologians, the tradition of the "Undivided Church" was the normal tradition of Christendom. They so thought of it partly, at least, because it seemed to them to be pre-eminently the voice of the Universal Church,—to be the one clear and authentic expression of the Church's general mind. *Securus judicat orbis terrarum.*

The Anglican appeal to Antiquity was, however, more than an appeal to the mind of the "Undivided Church." It was virtually an appeal to the deposit of faith,—to the "full, perfect, and sufficient" revelation made, once for all, in and through the Person and Work of our Lord. That revelation is the foundation of the Christian religion, and it is an unalterable foundation,—one that the Church may not diminish and cannot increase. High Churchmen attempted to show that certain doctrines which the Church of England rejected (or did not accept) were not part of that normative deposit, but were unlawful additions thereto.

The argument seems a simple one :—

There is a deposit of faith which alone is authoritative.

This asserted doctrine does not form part of the deposit of faith.

Therefore it is not authoritative.

Yes, the argument seems *very* simple, but it is not free from difficulty. Permit me once more to speak to you as an opponent of my own argument.

"We know the deposit of faith only through the testimony of the Church, and the testimony of the Church has become clear through successive definitions.

The appeal to the 'Undivided Church' presupposes

(1) that definition ceased when the Church ceased to be the 'Undivided Church'; or, if this presupposition be rejected, it presupposes

(2) that the imperfect conceptions reached in the earlier stages of a process of definition are more authoritative than the less imperfect conceptions subsequently reached.

Both alternatives are intolerable:—the first, because it implies that in certain very important matters, the Divine guidance of the Church has ceased or become less effectual: the second, because, *mutatis mutandis*, it would have justified Arius against St. Athanasius."

What is the reply to this?

(1) I admit, without reservation, that the deposit of faith is known to us only through the testimony of the Church and that "the testimony of the Church has become clear through successive definitions."*

(2) It would not be difficult to find in High Church literature passages which suggest a belief that the power of definition—the universally authoritative power of definition,—was temporarily lost when the Church ceased to be the "Undivided Church."

*I make no separate mention of the testimony of the New Testament Scriptures, because the testimony of those writings is part of the testimony of the Church.

Protestant theory isolated the Scriptures from the Church, and there are many traces of this isolation in Anglican thought. The impropriety of that isolation is, however, becoming more and more widely recognised.

"The universally authoritative power of definition," —may we not distinguish between the power which sets forth a definition and the definition which it sets forth? A definition is universally authoritative if it be set forth by a power which is universally authoritative. A definition may, however, be *true* even if it be not set forth by such a power, and, if it be true, it has an *intrinsic* authority which is universal.

The temporal mission of the Holy Ghost did not cease—was not even interrupted—when the Church ceased (as Anglicans believe) to be the "Undivided Church."

(3) Undoubtedly, Anglicans think that the testimony of the "Undivided Church" warrants their rejection of certain later definitions. It warrants, they think, the Anglican rejection of certain Roman definitions.

Now, the Church of Rome asserts a right and a power to define the deposit of faith. Her new dogmas are veritably new. They are not, indeed, *additions* to the deposit of faith, but they give (or purport to give) to that deposit a definition which it had not previously received.

Suppose those new dogmas to become centres of debate, and suppose it demonstrated that they were not known to the "Undivided Church." That demonstration would be quite inconclusive, for Rome could and would reply—"Certainly, they are *new* definitions, and I have power to make new definitions."

Is, then, the appeal to Antiquity useless in the modern controversy between England and Rome? Anglicans do not think so. They undoubtedly believe that the testimony of the "Undivided Church" warrants the Anglican rejection of certain Roman definitions.

What, then, is the logic of the Anglican rejection? It can be indicated (at least in a preliminary way) by a very simple sentence :—If a doctrine be *inconsistent with the testimony of the "Undivided Church,"* that doctrine is not a definition (or a valid definition) of the *depositum fidei.*

The conception of a gradually defined deposit does not require us to believe that later definitions must be inferences from earlier definitions, or must be related thereto as conclusions are related to premises. It does, however, require us to believe that successive definitions must be so related to each other that they can be reasonably regarded as definitions of one subject-matter.

The appeal to antiquity is an appeal to the Primitive Tradition of the deposit of faith. It may be that, in the Primitive Tradition, the deposit is but incompletely and imperfectly defined. Our appeal, however, is misunderstood if it be described as an appeal to an incomplete and imperfect definition,—as *that* and nothing more. It is an appeal *through* the primitive definition to the deposit which is the subject-matter of that definition. Undoubtedly, we know the deposit only through formal and informal definitions, and I have admitted that the definitions explicit or implicit in the Tradition of the "Undivided Church" may be incomplete and imperfect. If we reject a later definition, we do so, not because it is *different* from an earlier definition, but because it is *so different* therefrom that the two definitions cannot consist together as definitions of one subject-matter. The definitions apparent or implied in the Tradition of the "Undivided Church" are definitions of the

depositum fidei. If some later definition cannot logically consist therewith, it is not (although it purport to be) a definition of the same subject-matter,—that is, of *depositum fidei*. What, then, can it be but an unlawful addition to the body of Christian *credenda*?

This, I think, is the logic of the Anglican appeal from Rome to Antiquity. Clearly it does *not* presuppose "that the imperfect conceptions reached in the earlier stages of a process of definition are more authoritative than the less imperfect conceptions subsequently reached." It would *not* "have justified Arius against St. Athanasius."

This is the best account that I can give of the Anglican appeal from Rome to Christian Antiquity. As I have said, however, that appeal, if it be the beginning, is not the end of Anglican apologetic. High Churchmen used it to demonstrate the orthodoxy of their belief, but that demonstration is only a part of their proffered proof that the Church of England is Catholic.

By their appeal to Antiquity High Churchmen established a criterion of Catholicity, and, having done this, they proceeded to show that the Church of England satisfies that criterion. They examined the doctrinal standards of the Church of England in order to show that their own beliefs—already verified (as they thought) by the appeal to Antiquity,—faithfully interpreted those standards. They examined the ministry and sacramental system of that Church in order to show that Anglican Orders are Catholic Orders, that Anglican Sacraments are Catholic Sacraments.

Did they succeed? Are their proffered demonstrations valid? "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own

mind." Here and now I have no other duty than to indicate the method of an argument.

V.

As I have already said, the conception which, beyond all others, has been characteristic of the Oxford Movement and formative in its life is that of the Living Church. For High Churchmen the Christian religion is the religion of a visible Society.

At first, I think, they thought of the Church in a manner purely theological. They thought of it as the Divine Society, authoritative in its claim to the loyalty of Christian men, sustained by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and commissioned by our Lord Himself to be the guardian of His revelation, the teacher of His truth, the minister of His grace.

This mode of thought left the Church with a certain externality. There was a visible society, an exhibited revelation, a proffered grace, and all these things were authoritative because Divine, but the authority attributed them may be not unfairly described as an external authority. It was an authority *recognised* (one might almost say *perceived*) rather than *felt*,—an authority outside the experiences of the individual life, and akin to that which (by forms of thought now obsolete) was formerly attributed to Secular Sovereignty or Law. If one may speak for a moment in Hegelian language, the authority of the Church was largely an unmediated authority. And perhaps this was inevitable, for, when the Oxford Movement was young, English thought could not deal adequately either with institutions or with the act of faith.

The first considerable advance was made when

theologians learnt from Prof. T. H. Green, of Oxford, that man's ethical life is a process of self-realisation *in and through Society*. The lesson was an important one, for it showed

(*a*) that the moral ideal is not a merely external end, arbitrarily proposed to man by some Divine law, but is the *natural term* of human life and character ;

(*b*) that societies and institutions have what is ordinarily called an immanent teleology of an ethical kind, and (although, in a sense, external) are most vitally connected with man's most characteristic and intimate life.

It had always been recognised that the Christian religion has its own distinctive ideal of human nature and human life ; it was then seen, more clearly than ever before, that the Christian Society—the *visible* Christian Society—is the Divine instrument for achieving that ideal, or (more accurately) for building man up (for edifying man) into an increasing likeness thereto. The Christian Church is the formative home of the Christian life,—only in and through the Church can the Christian ideal be realised.

While some were learning these things, others were learning from contemporary Science to regard societies as *organisms*. A combination of these two lessons yielded the conception that the Church is an *ethical* organism.*

It was not, however, supposed that the Church is *merely* an ethical organism. The Church is not *merely* the instrument of a moral ideal. Moreover, because it is the Body of Christ, it departs from the type of an ethical organism in at least one most important particular. An ethical organism is impartially determined to the natural

*The conception of an ethical organism is not without difficulty. Some account of it is given in my essay on Patriotism (George Allen & Sons, London.)

end of each of its constituent individuals. In the Christian Church, however, men are united, not only to each other, but also and characteristically to Christ their Lord. To Him the conception of self-realisation in and through society cannot apply, and, consequently, the Society wherein He is the Head cannot be *merely* an ethical organism. When we speak of the Church as such an organism we are describing only one aspect of it,—we are describing it only in so far as it is a human instrument of man's ethical life.

This increasing recognition that the Church is veritably a society led men to represent the ministry and sacraments of the Church as organs of social life. They described the sacerdotal orders as "priestly organs of a priestly body," Baptism as the sacrament of initiation into the Christian Society, the Eucharist as the sacrament of Christian fellowship within that Society. High Churchmen, however, did not not intend these definitions to be exhaustive. They did not suppose that the "priestly body" evolved the "priestly organs" or conferred the priestly or episcopal powers. They believed those "organs" to be of Divine institution, those powers to pertain exclusively *(jure Divino)* to those "organs." Also, they believed Baptism to be the sacrament of regeneration, and the Eucharist to be, not merely a rite wherein Christians recognise their fellowship with each other, but a Communion in the Body and Blood of Christ and a re-presentation of the One Sacrifice. Undoubtedly, they recognised clearly "the social aspect" of Christian institutions, but—this cannot be too plainly said,—their recognition did not involve "Liberalism."

Another very important advance has recently been

made through recent studies in Christian Apologetic.*

Although the Christian religion does not appeal *primarily* to the reason of man, Christians have always recognised an obligation to show that their religion is reasonably credible. Their apologetic has been partly philosophical and partly historical,—partly a defence of the Christian conception of God and man, partly a defence of the primary Christian documents. This double line of defence, however, does not completely define the grounds of Christian belief. Besides doctrine and documents there is experience. The Christian religion is more than a body of conceptions : it subsists in believing hearts as an apprehension of truth in and through a certain experience. For Christian Apologetic that experience is the proximate ground of Christian belief. We *believe* because we have *felt*.

Now, what is the nature of Christian experience ? First of all, Christian experience—like all other experience—is an *awareness*. Of what are we therein aware ? What are the *data* in Christian experience ? What are the *objects* in Christian awareness ?

It is often said that Christian experience is an experience of Divine Realities,—that those realities are present in Christian experience just as other realities (which we call natural) are present in our every-day experience. Let us accept this, and attempt to define it more precisely. "Divine Realities"—*what* Divine Realities are present in Christian experience ? Sometimes we are told that the highest of all realities, God Himself, is present therein,—that Christian experience

*The next 8 paragraphs are based upon a paper read at a Conference at Westminster, arranged by the Rev. Father Waggett, S.S.J.E.

is an experience of God. Now, God is the One Absolute Existence and in Him all things consist. Can He be *immediately* an object in any human experience? Can He whose life embraces all objects and all subjects be Himself an object,—one object among many? Our answer must (I think) be in the negative. Let it be granted that in our Christian experience we are aware of a present Reality which is not ourselves and is rightly said to be Divine. The Divine nature of that Reality is not (I think) a *datum* in our experience, but is reached by inference or—if that word be thought too narrow—by some kind of interpretative process. God is undoubtedly present in our religious experience, but He is not obviously present therein. We apprehend Him *through* experience, not *in* experience.

Some there are who, by mystical ways we plain folk cannot tread, seemed to have attained unto visions we do not share. It were wrong to be always incredulous of such things, but it is difficult to resist the conclusion that even the most trustworthy assurance in mystic experience implies, not merely *presentation*, but also *interpretation*.

If, then, God be never *obviously* present in Christian experience, what is the Reality that we immediately know therein?

Our Christian experience is an experience of an *imparted* life,—not merely of a *new* life, but of a life *received*. In other words, it is an experience of grace. In Christian experience we know ourselves to be other than we were. Old things have passed away, all things have become new, and we walk in newness of life—in newness of hope and love—in the midst of a

transfigured world. Christian experience is experience of a changed life. The change is wrought *in* us, but it is not wrought *by* us,—we are subjects rather than agents, and the strength of our new life is a strength that we dare not claim as our own. Our new life is an imparted life ; our experience is experience of a Life-Giving Power.

Christian experience, however, is more than experience of an *imparted* life. It is characteristically experience within the Christian Society,—experience mediated by a certain ethical, sacramental, and doctrinal system. That system—the complex system of the Catholic Church—is not a mere adjunct of our Christian experience ; it is the *organ* of our experience, the instrumental means through which our experience comes to us.

The Christian life, then, is not merely an imparted life ; it is a *mediated* life,—a life which we receive through the apprehension of Reality given us by a certain instrumental system. Nor may we separate the system from the life which it ministers to us, for it is the proximate ground of that life. We receive the life by accepting the system. In other words, our Christian life is conditioned by Christian faith,—by faith in the Christian Society and its means of grace, faith in " One Catholic and Apostolic Church."

Permit me to place the matter before you, somewhat more completely, in another and simpler way.

Our Christian certainty has its ground in our Christian faith. Whatever be the value of philosophical apologetic and historical evidences, it is not by these alone that we are moved to make the distinctive Christian assents. Those assents are the expression, not merely of an intellectual conviction, but of a faith which (although it

includes intellectual conviction) is more than intellectual conviction, and is motived by things other than those that appeal to the "pure reason." That faith is the characteristic expression of our life, of our experience, within the Christian Society. The first disciples became Christians in virtue of certain experiences which moved them to Christian assent; we are Christians to-day in virtue of similar experiences—I do not say "identical experiences"—which move us to the same assent. Those experiences of ours are experiences within the Christian Society, and the faith they awaken is primarily faith in that Society. We accept the Christian *credenda* because we believe the Church which propounds those *credenda*, and we believe the Church because of our experience within the Church,—an experience which seems to us veridical. In each individual case that veridical experience is experience within a local society,—within, for example, the Church in Corinth or the Church in Ephesus, the Church in Rome or the Church in an English village,—but each local experience is part of a great body of similar experiences which reaches back to the earthly days of the Son of Man. Our Christian faith is not faith in an abstract doctrine; it is faith in a certain visible Divine order,—an order openly apparent in the world's history.*

The Living Church, then, is at once the immediate object and proximate ground of our faith.† That faith is evoked by our experience within the Church,—by all that the Church does to us and for us. We *believe* because we *feel*,—because we feel the convinc-

* cp. *Is the New Theology Christian?* (George Allen and Sons, London).

† A more detailed demonstration of this is given in *Liberal Theology and the Ground of Faith.*

ing power of those operations (operations within us) whereby the Church moves us to faith.

Here, then, we have a very real authority. That authority is the authority of the Living Church,—no longer merely external, but part of our deepest experience.

VI.

I am now approaching the end of my task. I have set the Oxford or High Church Movement before you as a progresssive realisation in the Anglican mind of the nature and authority of the Catholic Church. A few lines more and I have done.

We have reached the conception that the Church has a certain authority which is operative in Christian experience.

I. What is the range of that authority?

II. Does that authority help us to understand the nature of the Church's normal unity?

I. Clearly, the authority which is manifest in our Christian experience is the authority of the witnessing Church. Some months ago, in a letter written to a Roman Catholic friend, I attempted (from my own point of view) to give some account of that authority, and I can hardly now do better than transcribe what I then wrote.

> "The teaching and witnessing Church is the *ground* . . and . . *object* of our faith. We believe the Revelation which the Church sets forth, and, because our belief in that Revelation involves essentially belief in the Church which sets it forth, that Church furnishes the rule of our faith. We believe what the Church propounds,—the revelation involved in and presupposed by the

characteristic life and witness of the Church. There can be no other rule of Catholic belief than the Church's presentation of Revealed Truth.

Moreover, by the appointment of God, the Church exists in order that it may *(inter alia)* bear true witness, and it has the perpetual assistance of the Indwelling Spirit. It has power to define—if not completely, at least sufficiently,—the truth committed to it: it has also a power—ancillary to that first power and to the Church's primary vocation as the Witnessing Church,—to pass judgment upon 'les doctrines humaines.'*

It alone can define the limits of its competence."

II. The experience which is fundamental in apologetic discloses an authority which is *in* experience rather than *of* experience. It is the authority of a visible Society,—not merely of the local society wherein a given experience occurs, but of that Universal Society which includes all Catholic experience and has had a continuous life through all the Christian centuries. In brief, it is the authority of the Catholic Church.

Now, that authority is normal for Catholic thought and life, and, because it is normal for these things, the unity of the Catholic Church should be of such a kind that the complete authority of the Catholic Church can be operative in every part of that Church for the guidance of Catholic thought and life. What kind of unity does

*In "les doctrines humaines" I include, not only those of philosophy, but also those of Science,—for instance, those derived from Biblical Criticism. Can Authority control Criticism? Yes and no. Criticism can be controlled only by the canons of Criticism. If, however, Criticism be made *a criterion of validity*, and not merely *an inquiry into origins*, the canons of Criticism should include the canons of Christian assent,—the Christian canons of reasonable belief. If, in such a case, they do *not* include those canons of belief, they are not an adequate criterion of validity. In such a case the Church's censure would be (or imply) the assertion of a *complete* method against an *incomplete* method.

this indicate? It indicates, I think, nothing less than *a practical or administrative unity.*

I will not enlarge upon this theme, but will content myself with pointing out that the conclusion which we have now reached carries us far beyond certain conceptions which have been prominent in the Post-Reformation thought of England.

POSTSCRIPT I.

I have been asked, in effect,—Does not your article *presuppose* that the Established Church of England is Catholic? It does. The following explanations will, I hope, make my position clear.

I. I find myself making the primary Christian assents within a certain Christian Society. I ask myself—Why do I make those assents? I find that I make them in virtue of an experience which is characteristically experience within that Society. What is the nature of that experience? It is primarily an experience of grace of an imparted life. Moreover, it is not an isolated experience. It is part of a great body of experience which goes back to the earthly days of the Son of Man,—to the days when St. Peter confessed "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." I find, also, that my Christian assents are interpretations,—interpretations of the Person and Work of our Lord. Those interpretations are not my own: they are propounded to me by the Society in which I find myself. They are, however, not original within that local Society, but were gradually formulated by an earlier Society which was undeniably the Church Catholic. *There,* in the life of the Catholic Church, is the actual authority for the Christian interpretations. Moreover, that Church received the only authentic testimonies to those observable facts whereby the Christian Revelation was mediated. We accept the history as we accept the interpretations,—on the authority of the Catholic Church. That Church is not only the interpreting (defining) Church; it is also

the witnessing Church. Whatever in the Christian *credenda* be interpretation we accept on the authority of the interpreting Church: whatever therein be not interpretation but remembrance we accept on the authority of the witnessing Church. The interpreting Church and the witnessing Church are identical.

My Christian assents, then, have their ground in the Church Catholic. That is indubitable, and it brings me to the cardinal question:—Is the Society to which I actually belong integral in the Church Catholic? At this point historical and theological investigations begin. In my article, however, I have not concerned myself with such investigations, but have presupposed the results reached by Anglican students. I felt at liberty to do this, because my article was primarily intended to set forth the method of Anglican apologetic and certain Anglican thoughts concerning the nature and unity of the Catholic Church. It was *not* intended to prove that the Anglican reading of history and theology is true.

II. Is the Church of England part of the Church Catholic? The question is a complex one and suggests many inquiries. Most of these, however, are aspects of "the appeal to Antiquity" and may be conveniently united by asking whether the Church of England is in fact one—by identity of life and mission, authority and gifts—with the Church (confessedly Catholic) of the Apostolic age.

Now, societies are not mere *structures*,—they are *organisms*, living bodies. Therefore, each human society has not only a visible organisation and an observable history but also an inner life. That inner life is a resultant,—a characteristic result of all that the society is and has. Indeed, it is the *end* of the society,—that

for the sake of which the society exists. Consequently, the life of a society is the best indication of the real nature of that society,—more certain than its history, more significant than its organisation.

What, then, is the inner life of the Church of England? We who are members of the Church of England can answer that question as strangers to her communion cannot,—with the fulness and certainty of of men reporting an immediate experience.

What has been our experience within the Church of England? It seems to us identical in kind with those great experiences which, in the first Christian generations, gave to the then new-born Church its saints, its confessors, its martrys. Because our lives are straitened we are not as they, but we are straitened in ourselves, not in our Church. Within the Church of England we have been quickened to the confession of a true faith in the Son of God, therein have we been buried with Christ in baptism and raised with Him into newness of life, therein our faith and love are daily renewed by a grace-bearing power which is not our own. Whatever be our personal shortcomings, we know that within the Church itself there are all the possibilities of sanctity. Our experience within the Church of England is unmistakably experience of a grace effectual unto the confirmation of faith and the renewing of love. Our experience, moreover, is not something separable from our Church. It is meditated to us by our Church, and, the more intimate and faithful our fellowship in the Church, the more does grace abound unto us.

These things are facts,—known to us at first hand,—and, after making the widest and most careful comparisons, we find it hard to think that the experience

thus constituted and conditioned is not a Catholic experience, that the Society which gives us that experience is not a Catholic Society. The records and confessions of the Church's earliest years bear witness to an indubitably Catholic experience which has become normal for Christian life and thought. In our present experience within the Church of England that first experience seems to live again. That experience, like ours, was experience within, and mediated by, a Church. Could our experience repeat that earliest experience if the Church which gives it us inherited not the mission and powers of the earliest and undoubtedly Catholic Church ?

We are told that the Church of England has a doubtful ministry, that its doctrine is inadequate and its witness confused. We are not unmindful of these things, but we think it probable that, in our certainly-known experience, we make more trustworthy discovery of the nature of our Church than can be made by disputable inferences from history and theology.

Note. The foregoing argument seems to be a wider and more nearly ultimate form of the argument implied in the frequent Tractarian appeal to the experienced power of the Anglican Sacraments.

POSTSCRIPT II.

I append answers to some interesting questions which have reached me since my article was written.

I. *Are you not appealing to the Invisible Church and is not this pure Protestantism?*

(*a*) No, the experience of the Invisible Church is not an available experience, for we do not know who belongs to that Church. The experience of which I spoke is the experience of certain persons—myself and others—whom we *do* know.

(*b*) I am not prepared to define "pure Protestantism." If it be Protestant to allege that doctrine is given in experience, my reference to experience is not Protestant, for the experience* to which I refer has no doctrinal content.

Again, I accept the Christian *credenda* because, in and by experience, I am moved to accept the authority which propounds them. *That* is not Protestantism.

II. *If you feel sure of your visible Ecclesia by-law-established because you feel that grace has visited you through its rites,—what will you reply to a Wesleyan, a Congregationalist, or a Baptist who is equally certain that grace has visited him through the ordinances of his visible Ecclesia?*

In my first postscript I did not infer "Catholic character" from "experience of grace" but from the apparent identity of a present experience with the normal experience of Catholic Antiquity.

I do not deny—I am not aware that anyone denies—

*The experience of which I speak is *chiefly* moral, emotional, volitional. Because it is this, it guides and informs thought,—it gives to thought a new light.

that there is a real experience of grace within Nonconformist Societies, but is Nonconformist experience identical in kind with the "normal experience of Catholic Antiquity?" The fact that it does not move to "Catholic assent" seems to indicate that it is *not* identical therewith.

III. *Is it not highly significant that the existing Parliamentary Church never has been in Communion with the great historic Ecclesia Catholica spread throughout the world?*

From the mere fact of isolation we can infer only that there is error somewhere. Moreover, the absence of communion between two Societies isolates each equally. *Our* isolation has *your* isolation as its necessary correlate.

Is there not a *petitio principii* in this argument from isolation? That argument seems at the outset to throw all the discredit on one side, but *such* an incidence of discredit is the very thing you have to demonstrate.

It should not be forgotten that Rome is at least as widely separated as we are from those great Christian communities commonly known as "the Eastern Churches." The English and the Eastern Churches alike believe that Rome imposes non-catholic terms of communion. If this belief be well-founded it is Rome that is *really* isolated, and *that* by her own unlawful act. Now, it is clearly a false and inconclusive controversial method to make Rome the inappellable judge of her own case. All parties to this controversy are equally bound by the normal Catholic tradition. That tradition is to be found—in a form accepted as authoritative by all parties—only in Catholic Antiquity. *There*, there only, is the one generally accepted criterion. Therefore, we appeal from Rome to

Antiquity, and our appeal is a confident one. We think it demonstrable that the absence of intercommunion to-day is chiefly a consequence of Rome's unlawful departure* from the normal tradition. Therefore, we cannot infer from that absence any conclusion fatal to ourselves.

IV. *The Anglican ministry is doubtful—not by any argument from history or theology but practically from the united witness of East and West. The opinion of one learned and grave theologian, or (at most) of a few learned and grave theologians, makes an opinion probable. What then may be said of the opinion of a whole Church, and that the most historic Church in the world, the mother of England's Christianity, the unflinching and indefectible guardian of the sacramental system?*

Does not this make it at least probable that the succession is broken in the Established Church?

(a) The Eastern Churches are undoubtedly Churches "in the world." They are at least as "historic" as the Church of Rome; they are not unfaithful to the "sacramental system." Yet upon the most important point of difference—the supremacy of the Pope—they agree with us and not with you. Is there any reason *a priori* why we should think your opinion about our ministry weightier than their opinion about the Pope seems to you?

(b) A probability can always be set aside by adverse facts. We believe that our appeal to history discovers such facts. It shows—we are persuaded—that the Church of England is not what you take it to be and

*Rome, we think, has made innovations which are *inconsistent* with the normal tradition. Because that normal tradition is genuinely normal, innovations inconsistent therewith must be unlawful innovations.

that the normal Christian tradition is not what you take it to be.

V. *Where and what is the living, visible, and audible organ of the Established Church?*

In the Prayer Book, I suppose,—at least, most clearly and most authoritatively there.

The question does not seem a difficult one, and I do not think the answer doubtful.

VI. *Before the Established Church can be one with the Catholic Church, it must be one in itself. Now what kind of unity—ethical, doctrinal, sacramental,—is there between the inter-communicating members of the visible Established Church? Is there one fundamental doctrine that is not strongly denied?*

I admit without argument that we of the Anglican Church have brethren and fathers who are openly and painfully aberrant. But they *are* aberrant,—aberrant from the Church whose ministry they degrade, whose witness they obscure,—and we bear, not unprotestingly, with the public exhibition of their defects chiefly because of certain things which are consequences of historical accidents.

The mind of the Church of England is, however, authoritatively expressed, with sufficient clearness, in the Prayer Book, and the aberrations of individuals do not affect either the intrinsic authority or the clearness of that expression. We hope that one day an increased efficacy of the "Catholic tradition" in the Church of England will prevent such aberrations. Meanwhile we admit that our Church (like every other) is not completely effectual even within her own borders, but (as I explained in my article) we do not think that this weakness indicates a defect in her essential nature.

POSTSCRIPT III.

My friendly critic, Father Mc Nabb, appears to think :

(1) That the Catholic Church is a Visible Society which has a monarchical supremacy over its members,

(2) that my argument implies that such a Church actually exists,—a Church which *(jure Divino)* is supreme over the Anglican Church somewhat as Parliament is supreme over a municipal council.

Not unnaturally, he presses me with this question:—"*Where* is that Visible Sovereignty ? Where is it, if not in Rome ?" Clearly, he thinks that the answer *must* be—"It is in Rome or nowhere." He would urge—

(1) that, of all the Christian Communions, the Roman Catholic Church alone claims (and has ever claimed) to possess such sovereignty ;

(2) that no form of the "Branch Theory" can give us an actually existent unity capable of exercising such sovereignty.

"In Rome or nowhere,"—my own argument, he thinks, forbids me to say "Nowhere." Therefore, the very argument which I have built up against Rome should take me to Rome. The dialectic does not seem unfamiliar. I venture to believe that it is not unanswerable.

(a) My argument does not imply what Father Mc Nabb thinks it implies. It brings me to the authority of the Witnessing Church. Now, that Church has authority in matters of faith precisely because it is the Witnessing Church,—because it inherits and safeguards the *depositum fidei*, because it has received and now sets forth the Christian Revelation. *There*, in the

deposit of faith,—in the Revelation committed by our Lord to His Church,—is our ultimate objective authority in matters of faith. That deposit exists in the Catholic tradition of faith, and wherever that tradition has been integrally received, *there*—in the tradition-bearing body—is the objective, supernatural authority. That authority is there because the deposit-bearing tradition is there.

To-day, a Christian Society (if Catholic) is Catholic by inheritance,—not by recognition.* It is Catholic because it has received from the Apostolic Church a valid ministry and the divinely-given deposit. Inheriting these things, it possesses authority in matters of faith,—the objective authority of the deposit which it has received. That authority is an authority *in* the Society which possesses it, and does not subordinate that Society to any other or to any others. If that Society were completely isolated from the rest of the Christian world that authority would nevertheless be *there*,—unimpaired and available. If that Society be in fact part of some larger Christian organisation, the authority which it exercises as part of that organisation is not derived from that larger whole but is possessed by it in virtue of its inheritance, and is essentially an authority within itself. Nowhere along this line of thought does one come within sight of an external supremacy.

(b) It will be said, however, that my argument carries me beyond the conception of the Witnessing Church, that I have spoken of a Catholic authority which is other than the authority of the Church of England and is normal for the Church of England. I shall be

*Therefore, in a case of disputed Catholicity, the defence must necessarily be a demonstration of lawful descent and inheritance,—in other words, an appeal to Antiquity. The fact that the defendant in such a case is not recognised as Catholic by some other Christian body or bodies—let us say, by Rome,—is not immediately pertinent.

reminded that, according to my own account, my acceptance of the Christian *credenda* presupposes a recognition of the authority of the Catholic Church.

All this is quite true. I have said what I am alleged to have said, but I do not think that I have thereby surrendered to Rome.

I have pointed out that the Christian *credenda*—or the most important of them—are *interpretations*, and I have admitted that they are accepted on authority,—on the authority of the Catholic Church. Experience within the Church of England moves us to the recognition of a defining and interpreting authority which is not co-terminous with the Church of England but is characteristically Catholic, In effect, Father Mc Nabb says to me—"You admit that there is an interpreting Society which is other than the Church of England and normal for the Church of England. Where is that authoritative Society, if it be not the Church of Rome?"

I could begin my reply by demurring—at least in a provisional and hypothetical way—to the alleged admission, but it seems better to commence by examining more closely the conception of a defining and interpreting authority.

The Christian Revelation was committed, as the *depositum fidei*, to a Living Society which was appointed to bear witness to it. That Society was the Primitive Catholic Church, and the mission of that Society to be the Witnessing Church is inherited to-day by every local Society which, in virtue of a true descent, inherits its distinctive order and life. Now, the power of definition is concomitant with the mission to witness. The Church's duty to define is concomitant with—perhaps derived from—its authority to witness. In the presence of

heresies and doubts, the Church could not effectively set forth the deposit unless she had power to define it. Wherever the authority to witness has been inherited there has been inherited also authority to define, and the latter—like the former is an authority *within* the inheriting Society.

Is, then, the conception of general consent otiose? Certainly not. No local Society is indefectible. Our Lord's Promise—"the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"—was a promise to the Church as a whole and not to each several member thereof. By passing from local consent to general consent we bring a local tradition of truth under the protection of the Vincentian canon and of the maxim *Securus judicat orbis terrarum.* Catholic consent confirms the local consent. It does not, however, do this by giving to the local tradition an authority *different in kind* from the authority which that tradition naturally possesses in virtue of the fact that it is the defining tradition of a Catholic Society. Catholic consent confirms (when it does confirm) a local tradition by giving it the support of other traditions *of the same kind.* Catholic authority, in matters of faith, is the authority of concurrent lines of tradition. This, I think, is true whether that authority be expressed in informal consent—for instance, by agreement in worship and practice—or in formal definitions. When Catholic authority is thus defined, it does not imply the existence of a concrete sovereignty throned in some "Mother and Mistress" of the Churches. Nevertheless, when thus defined, it is a real, an accessible, and a potent authority.

Undoubtedly, these conceptions lift us above mere nationalism, but they do not bring us—at least, I think not,—within sight of the Papal Supremacy.

POSTSCRIPT IV.

I do not deny that the existing Church of England is divided from the Pre-Reformation Church by important differences. Those differences, however, are not inconsistent with spiritual identity. Except in the case of those things which philosophy of the Hegelian kind calls "timeless," identity is always "identity in difference." The Reformation undoubtedly made great changes, but those changes did not interrupt the tradition of Catholicity. The Post-Reformation Church continued to possess whatever made the Pre-Reformation Church Catholic.

The appeal to antiquity is in effect an appeal to an ideal standard established by a critical examination of the past. The normal conception of Catholicity—which is not the same thing as the *definition* of Catholicity—defines the unity which perdures through the Catholic generations, and it is reached by an analytical survey of Christian history. Analysis is always necessary, for in every Catholic community there have been elements which were not *entirely* essential to its Catholicity, even although they (or some of them) were, in fact, *expressions* of Catholic essentials. For instance, the Church of the Apostolic Age was undeniably the Catholic Church—the Spirit-bearing Body, yet Catholic Christians of that day had thoughts concerning the Second Advent which were ultimately contradicted by the course of events. Not even Rome is completely identical, in every particular of her belief and organisation, with the Apostolic Church. Her liturgy, her ordinal, her

creeds are (at least in part) products of a later history. Her undeniable identity with the Apostolic Church is unmistakeably an "identity in difference."

The identity of the Church of England with the Pre-Reformation Church is an identity of the same kind. The differences are obvious, but they are bridged (we think) by a continuous tradition of Catholic life and faith. This we seek to demonstrate by an appeal to the origins of Catholicity. We do not say that the Church of England exactly reproduces the Apostolic Church, for we know that there is in Christian history, not merely an unbroken tradition of Catholic essentials, but also a process of change. We do, however, say that the Church of England possesses to-day whatever made the Apostolic Church catholic. We appeal to that Church, not as to an isolated society, but as to the commencement of Christian history, and in the concrete particulars of her life and thought we seek to discriminate those essential facts which were the marks of her Catholicity and (not without developement) have unified the successive Christian generations by the tradition of Catholicity. We are dissentients from Rome because — in our judgement—the essential facts thus discriminated neither include nor imply certain things which Rome makes obligatory.

EXPERIENCE AS A CRITERION.

I HAVE been asked the following question: — Can Christian experience verify theological doctrine or establish the factual truth of reported happenings? Can it, for example, verify the doctrine of the Incarnation or the evangelical report of the raising of Lazarus? This Memorandum is an attempt to answer that question:—

1. Obviously, Christian experience, merely because it is experience, does furnish one criterion of truth. Because Christian experience is a fact, no doctrinal or historical statement can be true which is inconsistent with the factual reality of Christian experience. Similarly, because Mr. Balfour's Romanes Lecture is an actual fact, no statement could be true which would imply that Mr. Balfour did not deliver that Lecture. Again, on last Midsummer Day the sun rose at a certain hour,— no statement could be true which would imply either that the sun rose at some other time on that day or did not rise at all. In all these cases fact is a *negative* criterion. This, it will be remembered, is the criterion, and the only criterion, that Father Tyrrell derived from revelational experience.

Can we convert this negative criterion into a positive one? Can we rightly hold that the factual character of Christian experience verifies any and every doctrinal or historical statement which is *consistent* with that character of that experience? I think not. Undoubtedly every fact has only one series of ante-

cedents, and, if Reality (all that exists) be a rational order, that actual series is the only possible antecedent series.* We do not, however, *know* that Reality is, in fact, a rational order, and, even if it be such an order, we cannot *(with complete certainty)* define or formulate the Primary Principle of it or (*with complete certainty*) deduce the sequences which connect that primary principle with particular facts, — with particular forms of experience. The Hegelian philosophy construes Reality as a rational system,—a system held together by "the diamond meshwork of thought," —yet even the Hegelian dialectic will not enable us to deduce the colour of a blade of grass or to resolve conclusively historical doubts. I have heard from a Roman Catholic friend a clear demonstration, *a priori*, of the Pope's infallibility, but at one point at least in his deduction an alternative inference was possible.

If we set aside the thought of inference from the primary principle of a rational order, we are left with the thought of *sufficient reason*, but it seems clear that (in some cases at least) more than one sufficient reason is available. For instance, it has been said that we cannot explain the existence of the Christian Church unless we admit that He who died on Calvary rose again and manifested Himself to His disciples, Now, an actual Resurrection and actual manifestations would undoubtedly constitute a "sufficient reason" for the existence of the Christian Church, but so also would

*If Reality be a rational order, then the positive criterion from experience is that of the necessary presupposition, and, for the purpose of this Memorandum, may be expressed thus :—Whatever is necessarily presupposed by Christian experience is true. Because, however, of the uncertainties indicated in the text,—the uncertainty of our primary definition and the uncertainty of our deductions—we cannot say, with quite complete certainty, what things are necessary presuppositions of Christian experience.

common psychological processes in the "Christian consciousness." We may say, with some measure of truth, that the Christian Church was founded upon belief in the Resurrection, but that belief could have arisen either from actual manifestations of the Risen Christ or from "subjective" experiences which were mistakably supposed to be such manifestations, In either case there would have been a "sufficient reason,"

II. The alleged events reported in the evangelical narratives are not present in our experience to-day, and the metempirical facts (if facts they be) set forth by Christian theology have never been immediately and obviously present in any human experience. Christian experience has not (I think) any theological content.

It is often said that Christian experience is experience of God. Less often, but not infrequently, it is said that in Christian experience we immediately apprehend the Living Christ. All such statements are (I think) interpretations of experience, and not mere descriptions of it. Elsewhere* I have given reasons for thinking that God is never, *obviously and immediately*, an object in any human experience. It may be that we apprehend Him in experience, but, if we thus apprehend Him, it is by processes which are essentially processes of interpretation.

Christian experience is, indeed, not wholly "subjective." It is characteristically experience of an imparted life, and therefore it contains a certain objective reference. We may (rightly, as I think) explain that reference in terms of Christian theology, but such explanation is an *interpretation* of our experience,—it is not *given* in our experience.

*See pp. 21-22.

III. I have said that Christian experience is the ground of Christian faith. The *proximate object* of Christian faith is the Christian order in history,—let us say, the visible Christian Society. Men sometimes speak as though the object of our faith were a certain doctrine or group of doctrines. This, I think, is an incomplete analysis. I prefer to say that the proximate object of Christian faith is, not Christian doctrine, but that which propounds that doctrine. We believe the doctrine because we believe that the proponent of the doctrine—let us say, the authority which propounds the doctrine,—is trustworthy. Christian doctrine is the *secondary* object of our faith, and our faith in it is a derivative faith,—a faith derived from our faith in the proponent of that doctrine. This, I think, follows from the fact that the primary Christian elements in the body of Christian doctrine are *interpretations*,—interpretations of the Person and Work of our Lord. Those interpretations are not our own and we cannot verify them; we accept them because we believe that the authority which propounds them is trustworthy. It may be that, in some particular case, Christian doctrine is or seems to be the proximate object of faith. That doctrine, however, includes (as I have said) interpretation. It seems clear that acceptance of the *interpreting authority** is and must be a logical presupposition of acceptance of the *interpreting doctrine*, even though it be not an obvious antecedent thereof in experience.

*The interpretations included in the body of Christian doctrine are neither self-evidently true nor verifiable by us. It is, for example, not immediately obvious that our Lord is "of one substance with the Father" nor can we verify for ourselves the statement that He is thus consubstantial. Yet we accept those doctrinal interpretations, and we do not accept them without motive. That which moves us to acceptance may properly be called an authority. The authority which (in fact) so moves us is the witnessing, interpreting, and proponent Church.

IV. Because the Living Christian Society is the proximate object of our faith, the central article of the Christian Creed is one of the last:—"I believe One Catholic and Apostolic Church." Now, such belief is an affirmation that the Church is trustworthy. That affirmation is not ungrounded. Whatever be, in any individual case, its psychological antecedents, its *rational ground* is in the fact that the Church satisfies our religious need, and, when we who stand within the Church reflect upon our faith, that ground becomes a perduring motive. Elsewhere—in *A New Way in Apologetic*, in *Is the New Theology Christian?* in *Liberal Theology and the Ground of Faith*,—I have shown that our religious need (in its ultimate and general expression) is a need for help against the apparent contradiction between our vocation and our environment. In these modern days that contradiction faces us as a contradiction of our supernatural vocation to "the good life." The Church overcomes that contradiction by her persuasive and effectual witness to the "full, perfect, and sufficient" Revelation given once for all in and through the Person and Work of our Lord. "For us men and for our salvation," He who is eternally God assumed our human nature and submitted Himself to death,—"even the death of the Cross." By this we are assured that the Sovereign Reality of the Universe is neither hostile nor indifferent, that the apparent contradiction between our vocation and our environment is not final, that our highest vocation is our most reasonable vocation,—nay, is our *one* reasonable vocation. By her effectual witness to this Revelation given in and through the Person and Work of our Lord, the Church satisfies our religious

need, and her satisfaction of that need is the ground and motive of our faith in her.

Because it is thus grounded and motived, our faith in the Church extends to the Revelation which she sets forth. Here, then, we reach another criterion :— whatever is part of the Christian Revelation, or may be logically inferred* from that Revelation, is true.

Can we go beyond this ? Can we say—"Whatever is *consistent* with the Christian Revelation is true ?" I think not,—at least, not in virtue merely of our satisfied need. Suppose that we doubt a given statement in the New Testament,—the report of a miracle, or some hard saying in theology. The mere fact that it is consistent with the Christian Revelation will not prove it to be true *unless its consistency be logical*,—be such as connects a true inference with its premisses. We have no right, however, to suppose that consistency is always of that kind. Not every report apparently consistent with earlier knowledge is a true report ;—*this* is well-established by an experience that is universal.

One thing, however, is clear. Because we accept a Revelation mediated by supernatural events, we are compelled to reject the presupposition that miracles have not occurred. Consequently, we cannot accept critical conclusions which are *merely* inferences from that presupposition.

This criterion suggests an important contribution to

*It is clear that the Revelation which satisfies our religious need is what Father Tyrrell has called "statement." Revelation is not experience ; it is a given Truth—ultimately, a Truth concerning Reality—which we apprehend in and through experience. Therefore it is characteristically "statement," and, because it is "statement," inference from it is—at least antecedently both possible and legitimate. cp. my *Father Tyrrell's Modernism*, (Kegan Paul).

the methodology of Criticism. It is, however, derived from the Revelation which we receive in and through experience rather than from experience itself.

V. It may be that the Christian Revelation furnishes theological grounds for attributing to the Church an authority other than that which we recognise in experience, but such other authority (if actual) is beyond the scope of this Memorandum.

APPENDIX.

A distinguished Roman Catholic scholar, who read the English manuscript of my article, favoured me with several interesting and valuable communications. With his permission, I append extracts from his letters and my replies.

I. Le désaccord, il me semble, portera surtout sur deux points : *(a)* l'unité de l'Eglise: pour nous, l'Eglise doit nécessairement être et rester the "undivided Church." Par suite, il nous est impossible d'admettre la "branch theory."

(b) l'autorité de l'Eglise. L'exposé que vous faites du rôle doctrinal de l'épiscopat est d'un très grand intérêt, et justifie pleinement l'attitude des "high-churchmen" en lutte avec leurs évêques. Mais à nos yeux cette théorie est irrecevable : nous concevons l'Eglise comme un corps organisé hiérarchiquement, de sorte que l'episcopat, avec le pape à sa tête, est non seulement l'organe de l'enseignement, mais encore le juge suprême et irréformable de la doctrine. Cette croyance ne nous permettra pas d'admettre l'hypothèse que vous formulez :—

"When they (the Bishops) separate themselves from that tradition, their rule may be accurately described as a tyranny."

Les raisons de notre sentiment sont soit historiques soit théoriques : l'Eglise primitive a tenu comme souveraines et irréformables les sentences doctrinales de l'épiscopat (e.g. dans les Conciles), de même qu 'elle avait reçu comme telles celles des apôtres.—l'Eglise est non un organisme social à droits égaux, mais le corps du Christ, où la vie vient tout entière du chef aux membres. Il me semble que le conception que je combats ici met en péril cette doctrine; effectivement je crois que c'est elle qui a conduit notre pauvre Tyrrell—dont je ne confonds pas la position avec la vôtre—(dans *Scylla and Charybdis* introd : et "from heaven or from men,") à fausser avec la notion d'autorité, la conception même de l'Eglise.

Reply:—I. *The unity of the Church.* For us, the unity of the Church is not merely the past unity of the "undivided Church." It is a present unity, and subsists in and through the identity of orders and sacraments, in and through a real community of life and a common acceptance of the diversely interpreted deposit. That existing unity seems to us real, although we admit that it is incomplete.

I am not quite certain how the "branch theory" should be defined. Probably many of us would hesitate to accept it. We think of "degrees of unity" rather than of "branches," and prefer to say that the unity of the Catholic Church is an unity that subsists in members which to-day—through accidents of history—are *temporarily* more or less separated from each other.

This conception indicates. you will notice, a real unity actually existent.

II. *The Episcopate and the Authority of the Church.* I intended it to be apparent in my paper that the conception of "a social organism" can be applied to the Church only with very important reservations. For us, as for you, the Church is the Body of Christ and its characteristic life and gifts are Divine.

The *depositum fidei* is that which is ultimately authoritative. The Episcopate is not merely the teaching-organ of the Church: it possesses exclusively the power of definition. I suggest, however, that the deposit which the Episcopate is appointed to set forth and define subsists in a Tradition which is veritably a Tradition of the Living Church—embodied in belief and practice, in creeds and worship, in sacrament and institution—and not merely a Tradition of the Episcopal order.

We think it not impossible that a Bishop or group of Bishops should be unfaithful to that Tradition, but we deem it incredible that the whole Episcopate should be unfaithful, for such infidelity would involve a failure of the Divine Word—"the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

You will ask me—"What security have you that the Anglican group of Bishops has not been unfaithful?" We have, we think, the testimony of the Primitive Tradition. Some would add—"we have also the effectual power of our sacraments" but, if that be indeed an additional security, it is one that cannot easily be set forth quite conclusively.

II. L'unité de l'Eglise doit être non seulement passée, mais présente ;

sur ce point, je suis heureux de constater notre parfait accord. Mais j'ai peine a comprendre, que cette unité consiste (partiellement) " in a common acceptance of the diversely interpreted deposit." Le dépôt, en tant qu'il est constitué par un ensemble de vérités, dépend intrinsèquement des interprétations qu'il reçoit et est modifié par elles: comment donc peut-il y avoir " common acceptance," s'il y a " diverse interpretations." Si l'on entre dans cette voie, ne sera-t-on pas conduit à la thèse des anciens réformateurs sur les " dogmes fondamentaux,' éléments nécessaires et suffisants de l'unité doctrinale ? Mais alors, est-on en continuité avec l'ancienne Eglise, et comment peut-on déterminer ces " dogmes fondamentaux ? "

Au sujet de l'épiscopat, j'admets entièrement avec vous, " that the deposit which the Episcopate is appointed to set forth and define subsists in a tradition which is veritably a tradition of the living Church and not merely a Tradition of the Episcopal order. Mais j'ai beaucoup de difficultés à admettre qu'un groupe national d'évêques, Anglican ou Gallican, soit assuré de l'indéfectibilité doctrinale. Les promesses du Christ ont éte faites á l'Eglise entière, non à chaque Eglise nationale considérée isolément, et l'historie du passé ne nous montra-t-elle pas le nestorianisme ou le monophysisme entraînant les épiscopats entiers.

Reply :—I. " A common acceptance of the diversely interpreted deposit " :—by this phrase I intended primarily to indicate the very important fact that, in many theological matters, the Church of England and the Church of Rome are of one mind. This common consent is not the least important of the particulars wherein (as we think) the unity of the Church Catholic subsists. That common consent goes beyond the common acceptance of certain creeds : it includes acceptance of a common norm,—the primitive deposit. The Church of England (we think) accepts that deposit as normal for Christian faith and thought. The Church of Rome does the same. That agreement carries one beyond " common acceptance of certain creeds," and it is (we think) more than a coincidence,—it is a factor in an unity which, although incomplete, is actual and valuable.

Yet one cannot doubt that the Anglican presentation of that normal deposit differs from the Roman presentation thereof. Therefore, I spoke of "the diversely interpreted deposit." The diverse interpretations, however, do not destroy the " common acceptance." Outside the range of those diversities, there is a genuine common consent : within that range there is a genuine acceptance of a common norm.

I think I would make a broader distinction than is apparent in your letter between the deposit and the interpretations wherein it is exhibited. The deposit consists of certain things given by our Lord to His Church,—a rule of life and faith, sacraments, institutions, precepts, ideas. We possess it to-day, not as a thing clearly and entirely apart, but as something which subsists in the Church's structure, thought and life. The ideas integral in it are taken up into our interpretations, but I do not think that they depend "*intrinsèquement*" upon those interpretations or that (except subjectively, in and for our apprehension) they are modified by those interpretations.

Consider, for a moment, the Vatican definition of Papal Infallibility. Even if that definition be true, it is not a mere re-statement of the primitive deposit ; rather is it an explication or interpretation of that deposit. It undoubtedly forms part of the Roman re-presentation of the deposit, but that re-presentation (even if it be accurate) is one thing, and the *datum* (the thing re-presented) is another. The *datum* subsists in the re-presentation, although not exclusively therein, but it does not depend *intrinsèquement* upon that re-presentation, nor is it objectively modified thereby. Because there is always a difference of this kind between *datum* and re-presentation, "common acceptance" of the given deposit can consist with "diverse interpretations" (or re-presentations) thereof.

II. Neither the content of the deposit nor the dogmatic re-presentations of the deposit may be divided into things essential and things non-essential.

How, then, do we deal with "diverse interpretations?" It may be that, in some cases, the difference does not amount to a contradiction. In such cases one interpretation may be more complete than another or may complement another. When there is contradiction, one at least of the "diverse interpretations" must be a misinterpretation. Now, a misinterpretation is *not* a re-presentation. Precisely because it is a misinterpretation, it does not and cannot re-present the *datum*.

These reflections enable us (I think) to deal with "diverse interpretations" without any reference to the distinction between essentials and non-essentials.

III. "*The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*" The indefectibility thus promised does not extend to the separate action of a national church or "groupe national d'évêques."

The absence of indefectibility, however, does not imply the presence of error. Although a local Church be not indefectible, it may nevertheless be orthodox.

III. (1) Au sujet du dépôt et de ses interprétations, il n'y a peut-être entre nos conceptions qu'une simple différence de points de vue, mais qui n'est pas sans conséquence. Le dépôt peut être considéré, soit dans le passé, en tant qu'il a été confié par le Seigneur à son Eglise, et interprété par les anciens Pères ; soit dans le présent, en tant qu'il est aujourd' hui dans l'Eglise, règle de foi et de vie chrétienne. C'est sous ce second aspect que je le considère, car c'est comme vivant dans l'Eglise que le dépôt peut être un principe actif d'unité. Or en tant que vivant dans l'Eglise, il dépend intrinsèquement de l'interprétation que l'Eglise en donne ; il ne la vivifie en effet et ne la dirige qu'en tant qu'il est perçu par elle. Je reconnais cependant que le depôt considéré dans le passé, en tant qu'il est un critère accepté de part et d'autre, est aussi un principe d'unité, mais moins immédiat, moins efficace, mois vivant.

(2) Je ne suis pas sûr encore que nous puissions échapper à la distinction les points fondamentaux et non fondamentaux. Vous remarquez très justement qu'une interprétation fausse n'est plus une représentation du dépôt ; mais la question se posera sous une autre forme :—quels sont les éléments essentiels du dépôt ? quels sont ceux qui peuvent être éliminés par une erreur d'interprétation sans mettre en péril le dépôt lui-même ? Pour prendre des examples, peut-on dire que le dépôt sacramentaire est conservé intégralement dans une Eglise, quand son épiscopat ne reconnait pas, au moins pendant un temps considérable, la Messe comme un vrai sacrifice, et la pénitence comme un Sacrement et comme l'exercise légitime du pouvoir conféré à l'Eglise de remettre les péchés ?

(3) La distinction faite entre l'indéfectibilité de droit et l'orthodoxie de fait "d'un groupe national d'évêques" est parfaitament légitime. Mais alors on ne peut plus s'appuyer sur les promesses d'infaillibilité, contenues dans l'Evangile, et l'on n'a plus d'autre assurance que l'orthodoxie de fait, telle qu'on peut la constater par l'histoire et par l'observation directe. C'est une garantie précaire.

Reply :—I. The deposit is an actual and effective rule of Christian life and faith only in and through the forms wherein it is

recognised. An unrecognised deposit would not be an actual rule.

When I spoke of "common acceptance" I was thinking of the deposit "dans le present." For us, the Anglican *credenda* are veritable re-presentations of the deposit, and our acceptance of them implies a present acceptance of a deposit long ago received and now present. In so far as the Anglican re-presentations are identical with or consistent with those of Rome, is there not "common acceptance" of a present deposit? If there be, does not that "common acceptance" constitute some kind and degree of unity, and is not the deposit immediately operative (in that common acceptance of it) as "un principe actif d'unité?"

II. The deposit consists of certain divinely-given particulars. If those particulars be merely juxtaposed,—unified merely by the common property of being *data*,—all are equally essential.

Suppose, for a moment, the deposit to be of this character,—suppose it to consist of particulars merely juxtaposed. Then, if (in a given case) some of those particulars be not received, the deposit is diminished, but the non-reception of some particulars does not impair the reception of others.

The deposit has, however, more than a merely nominal unity. It has, at least, an instrumental or teleological unity,—an unity constituted by the purposeful adaptation of the deposit to a Divine end. Probably each particular in the deposit contributes something to the instrumental efficacy of the deposit. If there be *degrees* of efficacy, then we may distinguish as non-essential those particulars (if any such there be) which can be set aside without entirely destroying efficacy. Suppose, for example, the deposit to be given for the purpose of building men up into newness of life through sacramental union with our Lord, and suppose there to be degrees of edification and degrees of union. If there be any particulars which can be set aside without breaking or making impossible that sacramental union, those particulars may (I think) be described as non-essential.

Are there any such particulars? The question is highly important but I do not think that my reference to "diverse interpretations" requires me to answer it.

As to the very interesting case which you propound to me:—The Mass is what it is, *ex opere operato*.. If there were a true Mass at the altar, lapsed points of Eucharistic doctrine would (I think) be recoverable. The priesthood is what it is, *ex opere operato*. If there were a true priesthood, the exercise of disused powers might at any

time be resumed. The deposit (I think) would subsist sufficingly in Catholic Antiquity—an Antiquity not forgotten—and in the existing institutions, in the actual Mass, in the valid priesthood. Possibly lapsed points of Eucharistic doctrine would subsist also in formularies and in the liturgy.

How, think you, did the sacramental deposit subsist in Medicean Rome? One can hardly suppose that it subsisted in the faith and thought of the Medicean dignitaries.

III. We would say (I think) that "les promesses d' infallibilité' are fulfilled in every case of Catholic consent. We rest upon those promises whenever we rest upon such consent,—upon the general consent of the Church. Even to-day, when (as we think) the Church can no longer speak with one voice through Councils completely œcumenical in form, she can still (through several voices) speak with one mind.

Postscript. It occurs to me that I have misunderstood your question about "le dépôt sacramentaire." Your intention (I now surmise) was to ask whether, in the circumstances described, a Church would retain the sacramental deposit *effectively*,—*i.e.*, in such a way as to make her sacraments valid. My answer is this:—The sacramental deposit does not subsist *only* in episcopal opinions. Therefore, episcopal opinions cannot invalidate sacraments, unless those opinions involve the Church herself in heresy.

You are thinking, I suppose, of the Church of England. For some considerable time our bishops (you believe) did not recognise the Mass "comme un vrai sacrifice." Let that be admitted,—what do you mean by "un vrai sacrifice?" Do you mean a sacrifice which *repeats* the sacrifice on Calvary and adds something to its efficacy? Or do you mean a sacrifice which *re-presents* that sacrifice and is efficacious only through *its* efficacy? Sometimes, in the Church of England, disbelief in the Eucharistic Sacrifice has rested upon disbelief in the Real Presence. When not thus founded in heresy, it does not ordinarily extend beyond the first of the two conceptions I have indicated. Our 31st Article is (we think) directed against *that* conception,—not against the other.

As to "la pénitence,"—do you know the opening sentences of our Commination Service?

IV. Au sujet du sacrifice de la Messe, notre doctrine peut s'exprimer

par cette phrase de S. Cyprien : Passio est Domini sacrificium quod offerimus. Cf. la définition du Concile de Trente : " Una eademque est hostia, idem nunc offerens sacerdotum ministerio, qui seipsum tunc in cruce obtulit, sola offerendi ratione diversa. *Cutus quidem oblationis* cruentae, inquam, *fructus per hanc* incruentam uberrime *percipiuntur :* tantum abest, ut illi per hanc quovis modo derogetur."

Ma question ne portait pas précisément sur la transmission valide du pouvoir d'ordre, question d'ailleurs intimement liée avec celle-ci,—mais sur la permanence effective du dèpôt dans l'Eglise, Si l'on doit reconnaître que, pendant un temps notable, l'épiscopat considéré comme corps enseignant, a tenu sur le sacrifice de la Messe ou la présence réelle une doctrine contradictoire à la doctrine traditionnelle et révélée, que devenait alors le dépôt. Si le fait est exact, il me semble que nous avons le choix entre trois réponses : *(a)* ces doctrines n'étaient pas essentielles au dépôt ; *(b)* ces doctrines, contredites officiellement par l'épiscopat, se maintenaient dans la croyance des fidèles ; *(c)* pendant cet intervalle de temps, le dépôt n'a pas été effectivement sauvegardé. Pour des raisons déjà exposées, les deux premières réponses me semblent difficiles à admettre.

L'exemple de l'épiscopat romain du temps de Médicis ne me semble pas similaire : quels que fussent les écarts et les fautes des prélats, leur enseignement officiel était correct; v.p. ex., le bullaire d'Alexandre VI.

Reply :—I. In the case supposed I would first enquire whether the episcopal teaching did in fact contradict Revelation. Some things that, at first sight, seem to be contradictions are not contradictions.

If this enquiry disclosed a real contradiction, I would then ask " Is the Church (the local Church) committed to the contradiction ? " This question could not be answered without careful investigation. It would be necessary, I think, to ask and answer a number of preliminary questions,—among others the following :—

Is the erroneous doctrine merely the actual doctrine of individual bishops, or has it been adopted and put forth by some kind of corporate action ?

Has the erroneous doctrine found its way into the authoritative documents of the Church ? Is it expressed or indicated in any of the Church's services or rites ? Above all, what is the language and intention of the Church's Liturgy ?

Has the erroneous doctrine been universally accepted throughout the Church, or is there still an orthodox remnant ?

I incline to think it not incredible that—in doctrinal standards, in worship, in rites, in the belief of the faithful,—the *deposit of doctrine* might subsist as an effective reality (and not merely as a remembrance of something once possessed) even though bishops contradicted part of it.

II. Suppose this answer given,—other questions of great importance immediately arise. If the episcopal contradiction continued for a long time, *might* it not lead to a tacit acceptance of the contradiction by the whole of the local Church or, at least, to a tacit admission that the contradiction did not touch essentials, and *might* not either result entail the loss of sacramental Grace ?

Both these questions must (I think) be answered affirmatively.

III. There seems to be no safety outside the visible unity of the Catholic Church, but this does not give us an immediately practical rule, for it does not help us to find the Catholic Church.

The position is a difficult one, but I do not think it more difficult for Anglicans than for English Roman Catholics. If the Anglican reading of history and Revelation be true, the Anglican Church is the Catholic Church in and for England. If the Roman Catholic reading be true, the Roman Catholic Church is the Catholic Church in and for England. Is there any appeal more easily and more clearly conclusive than that to sound learning ? If there be, what is it ? If there be not, what is the plain man's *ratio credendi* ? Do we come at last to some personal experience—an experience of salvation, of the new birth ? But many Nonconformists credibly profess to have *that* experience, and yet both you and I believe that they are outside the visible unity of the Church.

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